

In the Claims:

Amend claims 17 and 18, as follows:

1.-16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for performing a surgical procedure on the heart of a patient through a working cavity in tissue between the heart and an entry incision, the apparatus comprising:

    a cannula configured for passing extravascularly through the entry incision and working cavity toward the heart;

    a suction attachment supported by the cannula and configured for contacting an exterior target site on the heart; and

    a support channel for a cardiac lead that is disposed on the suction attachment and that includes coaxial mating segments that are relatively rotatable about a coaxial axis thereof, each segment having a longitudinal slot extending along the entire length of an outer wall between distal and proximal ends of the segment for selective configuration as a closed channel in one relative rotational orientation for confining a cardiac lead in the support channel or as a channel open longitudinally along the entire length of the outer wall between proximal and distal ends of the segment in another relative rotational orientation of the segments that aligns the longitudinal slots for releasing a cardiac lead laterally from within the entire length of the support channel through the aligned slots.

18. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 17 including a cardiac lead connected to an electrode disposed near a surface of the suction attachment to contact the heart externally, the cardiac lead extending along the support channel in the closed configuration to the proximal ends of the segments for connecting the electrode to a utilization circuit and being releasable laterally from the support channel through the longitudinal ~~slot~~ slots formed in the segments as rotationally oriented in the open configuration.

19.-29. (Cancelled)